

But the Irish did not come to America empty-handed. They brought with them strong arms and an even stronger spirit that would help to build our Nation's great canals, bridges, and railroads. They would wrest coal from the mines of Pennsylvania and raise the skyscrapers of New York. They brought with them a love of words that enriched American journalism and literature and produced writers such as John Boyle O'Reilly, Ring Lardner, Eugene O'Neill, and Mary McCarthy. They brought as well a great reverence for education and created schools, colleges, and universities across the country renowned for their scholarship and social conscience.

Perhaps their greatest gifts to America have been a abiding love of liberty, and an patriotic spirit. Irish Americans have served with distinction in every American conflict, from the Revolutionary War to the Persian Gulf, and their keen sense of social justice made them among the first and most effective voices for labor reform. From Mary Kenney O'Sullivan to George Meany, they have been in the vanguard of efforts to improve working conditions and wages for all Americans. Generations of Irish Americans entered public service to reach out to those in need—to feed the poor, find jobs for the unemployed, fight for racial equality, and champion social reform. From the Kennedys of Massachusetts to the Daleys of Chicago, from Governor Al Smith to Ambassador Mike Mansfield, Americans of Irish descent have made important and enduring contributions to the public life of our Nation.

The United States continues to draw strength and vision from our multicultural, multiracial society. This month, when citizens across the country celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, we remember with special gratitude the gifts of Irish Americans: faith in God, love of family and community, and an unswerving commitment to freedom and justice that continues to enrich our Nation and fulfill the promise envisioned by the first Irish immigrants who turned their eyes and hearts toward America so many years ago.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7071 of March 2, 1998

Women's History Month, 1998

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

The Preamble to the Constitution begins, "We, the people." Yet that phrase, inspiring as it is, has not always included all Americans. Wom-

en's history in America has been the story of the struggle of women of all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds to be included in that simple but powerful statement. It is the story as well of how, in striving to reach their own great potential, women have strengthened and enriched our Nation.

In every era of American history, women have braved enormous challenges to change our world for the better. Women of faith in the early 17th century dared a dangerous journey and the unknown wilderness to seek freedom of conscience in a new land. As our Nation struggled for independence and to establish a new, more enlightened form of government, women like Esther DeBerdt Reed and Sarah Franklin Bache supplied food, clothes, and funds for Washington's soldiers. Freedom fighters like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman led hundreds of enslaved men and women to liberty through the Underground Railroad, and social reformers like Gertrude Bonnin advanced the human rights of American Indians. Suffragists like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Luisa Capetillo challenged the conventions of their times and sought to secure for women one of the most basic rights within our democracy.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the women's rights movement in America and its immeasurable contributions to our Nation's promise of justice and equality for all. The visionary women and men who gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, in July of 1848 for the first Women's Rights Convention in history gave voice so powerfully to women's aspirations for inclusion and empowerment that their vision continues to shape our world today.

Once disenfranchised, American women now serve at the highest levels of government, as Justices of the Supreme Court and in increasing numbers in the Cabinet and the United States Congress. Once denied the resources and opportunities to play organized sports, American women made sporting history this year by winning the first-ever Olympic Gold Medal in women's ice hockey. Women are cracking the glass ceilings of corporate management to lead some of our country's most prominent businesses. As parents and partners, entrepreneurs and artists, politicians and scientists, women are helping to build an America in which all citizens, regardless of gender, are free to live out their dreams.

Thanks to the efforts of women leaders, little girls across America today know far fewer limits than did their mothers and grandmothers. But there still remains work to be done to create a more just America, and we must rededicate ourselves to ending the discrimination that women still face. We must continue our efforts to help women succeed at work and at home, to be free from violent crime, and to enjoy quality health care. In doing so, we will confirm our conviction that "We, the people" includes us all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as Women's History Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, and to remember throughout the year the many voices and stories of courageous women who have made our Nation strong.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7072 of March 5, 1998

National Older Workers Employment Week, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans are living longer, healthier lives. As a Nation, we are witnessing a dramatic growth in the population of Americans aged 55 and older, a trend that will continue well into the next century. To maintain our dynamic economy and to fill the jobs of the 21st century, we must make the most of the creative potential and productive capacity of this growing segment of our society.

Unfortunately, many Americans aged 55 and older encounter serious difficulty finding employment when they lose their jobs or seek to change careers. Employers too often focus on the age of older workers instead of their qualifications and strong work ethic. By failing to recognize the wealth of skills and experience older workers can bring to their jobs, such employers deny them an equal opportunity to make their own valuable contributions to the American workplace.

To counter these challenges, laws and government programs offer older workers the protections and services they need to ensure fair employment opportunities and practices. The Age Discrimination Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act protect the basic rights of millions of older working Americans. The Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services also assist older workers through such efforts as the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the programs of the Administration on Aging.

Older Americans actively contribute to our communities through their hard work, wisdom, and experience. They have rightly earned our admiration and respect; they have also earned a fair chance at a good job. As we observe National Older Workers Employment Week, I urge all employers, when they hire new workers, to consider carefully the skills and other qualifications of men and women aged 55 and older and to fully utilize this rich national resource.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 8 through March 14, 1998, as National Older Workers Employment Week. I encourage all Americans to recognize the contributions that older workers make to the workplace and to our economy, and I urge public officials responsible for job placement, training, and related services to intensify their efforts throughout the year to help older Americans find suitable jobs and training.